

Sri Lanka Buddhist monk dies after self-immolation

 [bbc.com/news/world-asia-22677058](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-22677058)

A Buddhist monk who set himself alight as an act of protest has died of his injuries in Sri Lanka.

Bowatte Indarathana was protesting against the slaughter of cattle and the alleged conversion of Buddhists by the country's minority faiths.

He set himself on fire on Friday outside the country's holiest shrine - the Temple of the Tooth in the central city of Kandy.

The government condemned media outlets showing shocking video of the incident.

'Drawing the line'

The monk - believed to be aged 30 - belonged to a Buddhist revivalist group which has been campaigning against the Muslim halal method of slaughtering animals.

Buddhism forbids its own believers from killing animals but many Buddhists in Sri Lanka do eat meat, including beef, the BBC's Charles Haviland says.

Venerable Indarathana had also been calling for an end to proselytising by Christians and followers of other faiths in the Buddhist-majority nation of about 20m people.

Dozens of monks from the same group and their supporters later staged a demonstration in the capital Colombo after the authorities rejected their demand for the monk to be given a state funeral.

Self-immolation by Buddhist monks in Sri Lanka is exceptionally rare, although many Tibetan monks have recently committed suicide in this way for political reasons, our correspondent adds.

Meanwhile, senior government official Charith Herath told the BBC the monk had forewarned a reporter from a private TV station of his plan and the journalist then filmed the suicide instead of preventing it.

The official said the media should "draw the line" and stop certain things happening.

The incident comes amid tension in Sri Lanka as hardline Buddhist groups have campaigned against the halal slaughter method practised by Muslims. Several Muslim establishments have also been targeted by hardline Buddhists in recent months.